

Report to the Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Report from the HS2 Working Group



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Introduction

At a meeting attended by Leaders and Chief Executives of all Staffordshire Local Authorities held on the 29th January 2014, the Leader of the City Council gave a briefing on the alternative proposal for the HS2 route which had been developed by his Council.

At the Cabinet meeting held on 5th February 2014, the following was resolved:

- That the HS2 Working Party be asked to meet with representatives of the City Council to receive details of the City Council's proposals and to give full consideration to the possible implications of this alternative proposal for the Borough and to then report back to Council.

Background

The HS2 Working Group met on 19th February 2014 and 24th February 2014 to consider to alternative proposals.

At the meeting held on 19th February representatives from the City Council attended to give a presentation on the alternative proposals and to discuss the way forward with members of the working group. A copy of the slides and the minutes of this meeting are attached at appendices A and B.

The working group were clear that there should be a cautious approval in relation to the proposals and agreed that the City Council should re employ the consultant to look at specific areas including the station at Kidsgrove. Issues relating to Kidsgrove included the required re opening of the Harecastle tunnel as the current tunnel would not be sufficient for the new trains.

Members of the group were also in agreement that existing London Midland train services should not be disrupted or lost.

It was confirmed that the proposals were in alignment with the existing spatial core strategies of Newcastle under Lyme and Stoke.

Outcomes and Questions to be addressed.

That the following comments and concerns are reported back to Cabinet:

1. That specific issues relating to Kidsgrove and Newcastle under Lyme are addressed by the consultant.
2. That existing London Midland train services from Crewe should not be disrupted or lost - evidence is required to show that existing services will be maintained.
3. That the increase in traffic on the line should not prejudice the large employment scheme located along the line in terms of ability to carry freight.
4. That further work be carried out in terms of environmental assessment specifically for Kidsgrove (noise from the proposed construction and subsequent operation of the trains).
5. That additional local work be carried out in relation to the future environmental impact on properties along the line.
6. That clarification also be sought in relation to the assertion that there would be no compulsory purchase orders and that housing would not be affected.
7. That clarity be provided in relation to land exchange and costs.
8. How much disruption will there be and for how long.

Supporting Information

Slides from the first meeting are attached

Minutes from the meeting held on 19th February are attached

Invited Partners/Stakeholders/Residents

Members of the HS2 Working Group

Conclusions

- That the proposal showed a bold move that would ultimately bring benefits to the area if successful. The proposals offered the opportunity for the North Staffordshire urban area to become a core centre in the UK and focus for regeneration.
- That cautious approval be given.

Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)

Economic Regeneration, Business and Town Centres

Background Materials

Slides from the initial meeting

Minutes from the meeting held on 19 February 2014

Appendices

Appendix A: HS2 presentation slides

Appendix B: Minutes from the meeting of the working group held on 19 February 2014